

**REMARKS**

Responsive to telephone interviews between Examiner Rajguru and applicant's attorney, Donald E. Egan on September 20 and September 24, 2002, applicant has further amended claim 1, the only independent claim, to more fully define applicant's invention and to more clearly distinguish over the prior art.

First, this amendment replaces the open-ended term "comprising" with the more restrictive term "consisting of" in order to exclude from applicant's binder the specialized fluoride-containing material, namely a lithium and/or sodium water-swelling mica that is essential to the binder described by Adamowicz.

Second, applicant has revised the definition of the binder in Claim 1 so that the binder is defined as "consisting of up to 7.5 % by weight of a reactive water-soluble epichlorohydrin polymer binder and from 0 to 8% by weight of starch." Table 1, appearing at page 7 of applicant's specification shows the "Useable Range" for the epichlorohydrin resin binder as from 0 to 7.5% by weight. The same table shows the "Preferred Range" for Starch, the optional binder, to be from 0 to 8%. Thus the ranges of the binder components shown in amended claim 1 are clearly supported by Table 1.

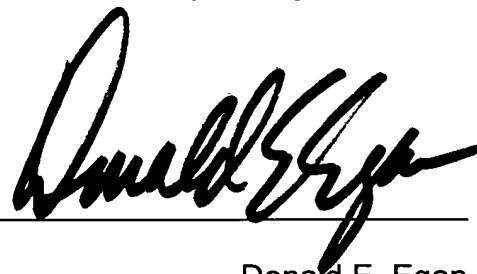
The wet strength resins that may be used as binders in applicant's invention are discussed at pages 7-9 of applicant's specification. The preferred wet strength resin is a polyamine epichlorohydrin resin sold under the name Kymene 557H (see page 9), but other useable epichlorohydrin resins are

disclosed as well. Accordingly it is submitted that the specification supports the use of "epichlorohydrin polymer" in the claims.

Applicant would like to make of record and thank Examiner Rajguru for the to telephone interviews between Examiner Rajguru and applicant's attorney, Donald E. Egan on September 20 and September 24, 2002. During the interviews the wording of the claims and the support for the wording of the claims was discussed. It is believed the foregoing amendment is in accordance with the agreement reached during the interview of September 24, 2002.

It is submitted that all of the claims in issue are patentable over the prior art. Reconsideration of all grounds of rejection is respectfully requested in the light of the foregoing amendment and remarks and an early Notice of Allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald E. Egan", is written over a horizontal line.

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**Amended Claim 1 – Marked-up copy**

1. (TWICE AMENDED) A composition suitable for making acoustical tiles in a water-felting process, said composition comprising a lightweight mineral aggregate, cellulosic fiber, a binder and, optionally, mineral wool, said binder consisting [essentially] of up to 7.5% by weight of a reactive water-soluble epichlorohydrin polymer binder and [optionally,] from 0 to 8% by weight of starch.